

Message Text

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SUBJECT: THE 1973 ELECTIONS: INITIAL REACTIONS TO CENTER-
RIGHT ALIGNMENT

REF: TEL AVIV 5925

SUMMARY: ARIEL SHARON'S PROPOSAL TO FORM NEW CENTER-RIGHT ALIGNMENT (GAHAL, FREE CENTER, STATE LIST, INDEPENDENT LIBERALS AND LAND OF ISRAEL MOVEMENT) SO FAR HAS EVOKED A FLURRY OF DEBATE BUT SEEMS UNLIKELY TO CONSTITUTE CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO LABOR-MAPAM ALIGNMENT. HISTORY ACRIMONIOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN MENAHEM BEGIN AND SHMUEL TAMIR PLUS DIFFICULTIES ON PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT AND DISTRIBUTION PLACES ON SINGLE KNESSET LIST SUGGEST STORMY FUTURE. INDEPENDENT LIBERALS HAVE REFUSED TO JOIN AND FREE CENTER HAS POSTPONED DECISION AFTER CENTRAL COMMITTEE DEBATE REVEALED OPPOSITION YOUNGER MEMBERS. HERUT LEADER MENAHEM BEGIN EXTENDED INFORMAL INVITATION TO NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY TO JOIN NEW ALIGNMENT, BUT SUCH ADHESION IMPROBABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. HERUT CENTRAL COMMITTEE JULY 31 ENDORSED ALIGNMENT PROPOSAL 119-18, 8 ABSTAINING. HERUT MENORITY, LED BY YOCHANAN BADER AND YORAM ARIDOR, ATTACKED PROPOSED ALIGNMENT AT CENTRAL COMMITTEE, UNDERLINING ACRIMONIOUS RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BEGIN
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AND FREE CENTER BLEADER TAMIR SINCE LATTER BROKE FROM HERUT IN

1967. BADER CHARACTERIZED PROPOSAL AS POLYGAMY WHILE ARIDOR HELD THAT TAMIR WILL UNDERMINE HERUT INTERNAL UNITY AND MAY BREAK FROM ALIGNMENT AGAIN AFTER ELECTIONS. IRONCIALLY EZER WEIZMAN, WHO HAD MADE SIMILAR ALIGNMENT PROPOSAL UNSUCCESSFULLY LAST YEAR, NOW DEFENDED BEGIN, NOTING THAT ADHERSION OF NEW PERSONALITIEIES SUCH AS SHARON AND LAND OF ISRAEL LEADER MOSHE SHAMIR MORE IMPORTANT THAN TAMIR ISSUED.

2. FREE CENTER EXECUTIVE POSTPONED DECISION ON ADHERENCE NEW ALIGNMENT UNTIL NEXT WEEK. WHILE TAMIR SAID HE WAS WILLING "TO LET BYGONES BY BYGONES FOR COUNTRY'S SAKE", YOUNGER MEMBER WHO HAD NEVER BEEN IN HERUT VIGORUSLY OPPOSED ENTERING NEW ALIGNMENT. HERUT AND FREE CENTER DISAGREE ON REFORM ELECTORAL SYSTEM, DIRECT ELECTKON OF MAYORS, ATTITUDE TO RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT. ABOVE ALL ISSUE OF HOW MANY GUARANTEED PLACES FREE CENTER WILL DEMAND ON KNESSET LISTING BLOCK.

3. STATE LIST DOUBTLESS WILL AGREE TO JOIN NEW ALIGNEMENT BU 40 PARTY MEMBERS ALREADY TOOK AD IN YEDIOT AHARONOT ANNOUNCING INTENTION TO RESIGN IF ALIGNMENT MATERIALIZES. STATE LIST IS REMANANT OF BEN-GURION'S SUPPORTERS FROM LABOR PARTY AND MANY CANNOT ACCEPT FUSION WITH RIGHT-WING PARTIES.

4. THE INDEPENDENT LIBERAL PARTY EXECUTIVE, BY A VOTE OF 53-3, REJECTED ENTRY INTO NEW ALIGNEMNT. MOSHE KOL AND GIDEON HAUSNER UNDERLINED POLICY DIFFERENCES IN FOREIGN AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS PRECLUDED COLLABORATION WITH GAHAL.

5. NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY EXECUTIVE WILL DISCUSS ISS OF ENTRY INTO ALIGNMENT IF FORMAL INVITATION EXTENDED. IN RESPONSE TO BEGIN'S INFORMAL PROPLSAL, MINISTERS HAZANI AND WARHAFTIG HAVE ALREADY REJECTED PROPOSAL OUTRIGHT BUT YOUTH FACTION HAS STATED THAT PARTY SHOULD EXAMINE ANY FORMAL PROPOSAL FOR ADHERSION PROVIDED A PROGRAM TO ASSURE ISRAEL'S JEWISH CHARACTER CAN BE AGREED UPON.

6. INTER-PARTY DEBATES SUGGEST THAT FORMATION NEW ALIGNEMTN FACES STORMY FUTURE. DISPOSITION OF GUARANTEED PLACES ON KNESSET LIST AND PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE EASY BUT UNDERLYING QUESTION IS WHETHER TAMIR, BEGIN, WEIZMAN AND SHARON CAN AND WILL CONFIDENTIAL

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WANT TO WORK TOGETHER. HISTORY OF ACRIMINIOUS RELATIONS BETWEEN BEGIN AND TAMIR ENCOURAGES SKEPTICISM. IN ANY CASE ELECTORAL POSSIBILITIES NEW FORMATION SEEM LIMITED. VELIOTES

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